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PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Report of the Third Committee

Rapporteur: Mrs. Mónica MARTÍNEZ (Ecuador)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 4th plenary meeting, on 19 September 1997, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" and to allocate it to the Third Committee.

2. The Third Committee considered the item at its 32nd, 39th and 43rd meetings, on 11, 17 and 19 November 1997. An account of the Committee's discussion of the item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.3/52/SR.32, 39 and 43).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade (A/52/509).

4. At the 32nd meeting, on 11 November, the Director, New York Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, made an introductory statement (A/C.3/52/SR.32).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.3/52/L.40/Rev.1

5. At the 39th meeting, on 17 November, the representative of Denmark, on behalf of Armenia, Australia, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Greece, Guyana, Iceland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway,

Peru, Solomon Islands, Spain and Sweden, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People" (A/C.3/52/L.40/Rev.1). Subsequently, Argentina and Turkmenistan joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the 43rd meeting, on 19 November, Costa Rica and Guatemala joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/52/L.40/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE THIRD COMMITTEE

8. The Third Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People,

Recalling also that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health, and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Decade,[1] the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations system, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;[2]

2. Affirms its conviction of the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people, and that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world;

3. Emphasizes the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems

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[1] Resolution 50/157, annex.

[2] A/52/509.

and, for these purposes, its recommendation that the United Nations University consider the possibility of sponsoring, in each region, one or more existing institutions of higher education as centres of excellence and the diffusion of expertise, inter alia, by conducting relevant studies, and invites the Commission on Human Rights to recommend appropriate means of implementation;

4. Notes that the programme of activities for the Decade may be reviewed and updated throughout the Decade and that at the mid-point of the Decade the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should review the results of the activities in order to identify obstacles to the achievement of the goals of the Decade and to recommend solutions for overcoming those obstacles;

5. Decides to appoint the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as Coordinator for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and requests her in that capacity:

(a) To promote the objectives of the Decade, taking into account, in the fulfilment of her functions, the special concerns of indigenous people;

(b) To consider organizing a workshop for research and higher education institutions, as outlined in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/32 of 11 April 1997,[3] focusing on indigenous issues, in consultations with indigenous people and the relevant United Nations bodies;

(c) To give due regard to the dissemination of information on the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people;

(d) To submit, through the Secretary-General, an annual report to the General Assembly on the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade;

6. Reaffirms as a major objective of the Decade the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people, and underlines the importance of effective participation by indigenous representatives in the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995;[4]

7. Also reaffirms among the objectives of the Decade, as listed in the programme of activities, the consideration of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system;

8. Welcomes the holding of the Second Workshop on the Consideration of a Permanent Forum for Indigenous People, in Santiago, Chile, from 30 June to

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[3] See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 3 (E/1997/23), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

2 July 1997, takes note of the report[5] thereon, and recommends that the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session take into account the outcome of the workshop and the comments received by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights from Governments, the relevant United Nations bodies and organizations and the specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and indigenous organizations in its further consideration of the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system;

9. Also welcomes the holding of the workshop on traditional knowledge and biological diversity, in Madrid from 24 to 28 November 1997, convened to address the implementation of article 8 (j) of the Convention on Biological Diversity[6] with regard to the role of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities in the sustainable use of biological diversity;

10. Encourages Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(b) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters that affect them;

(c) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

(d) Contributing to the voluntary United Nations Trust Fund for the Decade;

(e) Contributing, together with other donors, to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations in order to assist indigenous representatives in participating in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights charged with elaborating a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people;

(f) Considering contributing, as appropriate, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Decade;

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[5] E/CN.4/SUB.2/AC.4/1997/CRP.1.

[6] See United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on Biological Diversity (Environmental Law and Institution Programme Activity Centre), June 1992.

(g) Identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;

11. Invites the United Nations financial and developmental institutions, operational programmes and the specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, including by preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives, and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for coordination of activities related to the Decade with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

12. Recommends that the Secretary-General ensure coordinated follow-up to the recommendations concerning indigenous people of relevant world conferences, namely, the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992, the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995;

13. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to submit, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session a report on the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade;

14. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".